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INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Medical Supply Situation
in the Soviet Zone

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1. The official newspaper of the SED "Neues Deutschland" published an interview recently with Prof. Dr. Linser, the head of the Central Health Administration of the German Economic Commission (DVK). In his interview Dr. Linser conceded that there were still bottlenecks and shortages in the medical supply situation in the Soviet Zone, but maintained nevertheless that there was an adequate and continuing supply of medicaments and pharmaceuticals to take care of the needs of the population.
2. According to source, the above statement does not reflect the true state of the medical supply problem in the Soviet Zone. Source concedes that certain gaps in medical supplies have been filled recently to some extent. For example, in the case of penicillin it was possible to relax considerably the former strict rationing controls, and at present the production of penicillin in the Soviet Zone almost approaches the demand. The insulin situation has also greatly improved recently, although this drug is still not produced in sufficient quantity, probably because of the relatively small number of available cattle.
3. On the other hand, certain bottlenecks are continuing and no immediate prospect of improvement seems to be in sight. One of these concerns the medicines for the treatment of tuberculosis. At present streptomycin and the new preparation Tb I 698 are most urgently in demand. Both medicines are either unavailable or in extremely short supply in the Soviet Zone. The treatment of health insurance patients and patients in public hospitals with either of these medicines is not yet possible.

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4. There are other considerable wants in the medical supply situation which make the work in the hospitals, and especially in the operating rooms, more difficult. Particularly noticeable is the overall shortage of narcotics, such as morphine, codeine, and diconid. Attempts to produce these drugs in the Soviet Zone have not yet met with the hoped-for success and most of the requirements must be met through purchase in West Germany. There is also a great lack of chemically composed heart and "circulator" stimulants, such as synnathol, coramin, gacanol, etc. There is also a shortage of medicines for use during childbirth and an extreme shortage of good vitamin preparations.
5. The lack of pharmaceutical chemicals, used for analysis and other purposes in serology, has caused a special bottleneck. All pure chemicals are either scarce or un procurable through legal channels. This is due to the fact that the leading manufacturers, Merck, Knoll, Beuer, etc. are located in Western Germany, and the chemicals would have to be obtained for West Mark payments, or through compensation agreements. Pharmacists and clinics feel especially the lack of alkaloids, especially atrenin, nilocarnine, strophanthin, caffeine, and quinine.